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# THE BAPTIST Record

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## Prof: denominations entering transition

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP) — The loyalty level to denominations may be on the endangered species list, but a Southern Baptist professor isn't forecasting extinction — just change.

"I'm not so sure it's as tragic as we think it is," Steve Stookey, associate professor of church history at Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, told a group of student workers attending his Aug. 12 seminar, "Postdenominationalism: The Student and Religious Identity." The session was part of Student Week '98 at Glorieta (N.M.) Conference Center.

"Postdenominationalism doesn't mean denominations are going to die; they're just changing," Stookey said. "We're talking about a transition. The question we should be asking is, 'What are they going to look like (in the 21st century)?'"

Stookey said he doesn't even like the term "postdenominationalism," preferring "neodenominationalism" as a more accurate description of today's religious world.

"Denominations are under radical reconstruction right now," he added, "and a lot of times we aren't even aware of it."

He cited several evidences of denominational erosion, such as:

- Increasing use of generic church names which leave out denominational affiliation.
- Explosive growth of para-church groups, e.g. Promise Keepers, which are attracting time, energy, and resources from local churches. Many of these groups are big on worship and service, but have minimal theological or doctrinal stances so they can appeal to a wide variety of denominations.
- A shift from a focus on long-term global missions investments to short-term mission projects often initiated at the local church level. Southern Baptists have done

a good job of recognizing this trend and partnering with local churches to provide short-term missions opportunities without losing a global focus, Stookey said.

● The rise of the Internet and desktop publishing, which has created an "entrepreneurial spirit" in some churches when it comes to producing Christian resources. It has the potential, Stookey said, to erode support or use of denominational publishing houses.

● Seminaries in flux. Denominational conflicts have resulted in numerous "smaller niche" schools. Many seminaries are seriously evaluating their curriculum and training methods needed for the 21st century.

So, what's causing all this?

In addition to waning denominational loyalty, Stookey cited "postmodernism" and "generational challenges."

Discussing postmodernism, Stookey said: "We're in a time frame of change intellectually. Since the Enlightenment in the 1600s, reason and rationality have ruled the day for 300 years. We were all influenced by it, but now we're seeing a transition in the way people think."

Whereas the Enlightenment affirmed the idea that man's capacity for knowledge was unlimited, the postmodern mind sees limits, Stookey explained. As a result, postmodern thinking has trouble with concepts like absolute truth and universal identities. Authority structures are mistrusted, holding contradictory ideas is acceptable, and tolerance is lifted up as a virtue.

"The postmodern mind is very accepting of pluralism," Stookey said. "'Spirituality' is the buzzword, not 'religion.' And any religion is OK as long as it speaks to your spirit."

As a result, Stookey said America today is characterized by a "consumer religion" where people "shop" for the church that meets their practical and experiential, not theological, needs.

"I think the church has fostered this by not providing people with balanced disci-

pleship," he said. "We've left some things out and people are trying to fill those holes with something else."

For example, Stookey said he believes Southern Baptists are strong in Bible study but have steered clear of dealing with the Holy Spirit and more contemplative aspects of discipleship.

"We're seeing a recovery of this in recent years with resources like 'Experiencing God,'" Stookey said, adding CrossSeekers, a new collegiate discipleship initiative sponsored by Southern Baptists' National Student Ministry, is a good attempt at providing balanced biblical instruction and accountability.

Another result of today's postdenominational and postmodern world, Stookey said, is a loss of denominational distinctives, particularly among younger generations.

"It used to be very clear what separated a Baptist from a Methodist or Presbyterian and so on, but those lines have been blurred."

Many of today's young people have no knowledge of such Baptist beliefs as priesthood of the believer, autonomy of the local church or believer's baptism, Stookey said.

"We've dropped the ball when it comes to transmitting our Baptist identity," he added. "We're going to have to find new and unique ways to share those ideas."

In the Southern Baptist Convention, specifically, many churches are more committed to "sub-groups" than the national entity, Stookey said.

For example, some churches have more allegiance to their state convention, megachurches have their own network and conferences, and other congregations form groups around worship styles such as "seeker-sensitive" or "liturgical."

Despite all this, Stookey believes "denominations will remain and they will remain relevant. For a denomination to be the most relevant, it needs to be able to empower local churches ... and the churches and denominations who are able to maintain allegiance to the unchanging gospel, but who find unique ways to transmit it, are the ones who are going to win out."

### Looking back

10 years ago

Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., is a "very troubled campus and divided institution," according to a report filed with the Association of Theological Schools in the U.S. and Canada. The association's conclusion will eventually determine the Southern Baptist seminary's accreditation status.

20 years ago

The Southern Baptist Convention adopts a logo for use by any organization desiring to indicate their relationship to the nation's largest Protestant denomination. The logo was proposed by the Southern Baptist Public Relations Advisory Committee.

50 years ago

"That Ye May Know Him," is the theme of the Mississippi Baptist Hour, the first denominational statewide radio broadcast. D.A. McCall, State Missions Secretary, will open the broadcast September 5, and W. Douglas Hudgins of Grenada will be the speaker for the month of September.

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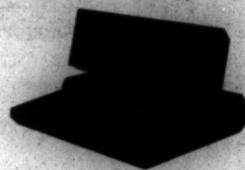
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# The human side of record offerings

**M**ississippi Baptists are still riding high on the news last week that we once again led the entire Southern Baptist Convention in support for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions — the lifeblood of our worldwide missionary effort (Matt. 28:18-20) and arguably the greatest missions offering in modern Christendom.

In these heady days of pride and accomplishment following that news, however, God has sent us a poignant reminder (as he often does) of the enormous price to be paid for following the Master and of the eternal reward to faithfulness to his call.

Ruth Everley Hayes died in Salisbury, Md., on Aug. 15 at the age of 81, having retired in 1983 after 35 years of missionary service.

She is mostly remembered among Southern Baptists as the nurse who served alongside missionary physician Bill Wallace in China, where he was martyred after the communists came to power in that country.

Hayes, herself under the constant scrutiny of the communists, was the person who retrieved Wallace's battered body from the prison where he was tortured to death.

Anxious to cover up their misdeed, the communists detained Hayes and hastily buried Wallace in a sealed coffin on the banks of the West River.

Six long months passed before she was released and allowed to return to the U.S. She didn't stay home for long.

Hayes accepted a missionary appointment to help open a Baptist clinic in Indonesia, which eventually grew into the huge Kediri Baptist Hospital. She was the only nurse at the hospital, and served as hospital treasurer and photographer for the ongoing

Indonesian mission work.

She was also instrumental in preparing the Indonesian Baptist hymnal.

Hayes moved to Bukittinggi in 1971 to assist in opening Emmanuel Baptist Hospital. She and other medical missionaries were denied permission to practice medicine and the project had to be closed for five years.

However, Hayes didn't waste those five years. She developed relationships with the Indonesian people through her orchid-growing hobby and taught English to the locals — one of whom was instrumental in getting government approval to reopen the hospital in 1975.

Hayes and her medical missionary cohorts were also partly responsible for the incredible revival in Indonesia that resulted in two million baptisms and a quadrupling of Baptist congregations.

Such is the remarkable life of a remarkable woman in service to our Savior. As we rejoice in our well-earned reputation as the perennial leader in international missions giving, it behooves us to remember the thousands of God-called missionaries like



Everley Hayes (above, center left) poses with the 1950 graduates of the nursing school at Stout Memorial Hospital in Wuchow, China. Hayes (inset photo) served 35 years as an Southern Baptist international missionary. (BP photos)

Everley Hayes who braved — and continue to brave — dangers we will never know in far-flung parts of the world where their very location has to be a well-guarded secret. That's the human side of record offerings.

Moreover, it behooves us to humble ourselves, pray constantly for our missionaries, and continue our legacy of sacrificial giving.

In light of people like Everley Hayes, it's the very least we can do.

Sources: *Baptist Press* and "Bill Wallace of China," by Jesse C. Fletcher.

## GUEST OPINION:



### Baptist colleges: seeking truth, church

By Rex Yancey, pastor  
First Church, Pascagoula

They are not perfect. However, they will proclaim "Veritas Christo et Ecclesiae," and they will imply that human reason has its limitations.

I have found my education to be strong enough to support my life and ministry.

I shall always be grateful to Mississippi Baptists for helping me to receive a Christian education.

Your investment in me so far has netted a 33-year ministry in Mississippi. I hope to have many more years of ministry.

Will you join me in supporting our administrators, faculties, and colleges as they provide the next generation of Mississippi Baptist students with a Christian education?

You can start by pointing your sons and daughters, and high school juniors and seniors in your church, in the direction of our Baptist colleges.

Our students today have many options when they consider their undergraduate work.

However, for a Christian education always grounded in truth and the church, our Mississippi Baptist schools will always be their very best options.

Yancey is a former two-term president of the Mississippi Baptist Convention and is currently serving as chairman of the Mississippi Baptist Education Commission.

I am a product of Mississippi Baptist schools. My wife is a BMC graduate, and my son is a graduate of MC.

I have served on the trustee boards at two of our institutions, and now have the opportunity to relate to all three institutions on the Mississippi Baptist Education Commission.

Howell W. Todd, MC president; Harold E.

Fisher, BMC president; and Larry W. Kennedy, WCC president, deserve our prayers and support.

Your children deserve a Christian education. I recommend without reservation all three of our Mississippi Baptist institutions of higher learning.



Mississippi  
College



# Missionaries laying low after U.S. missile strikes

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Southern Baptist missionaries living in tense areas of Africa and Asia were responding to U.S. State Department warnings Aug. 20 to stay off the streets and out of sight.

The warnings came as anti-American sentiment rose in response to U.S. cruise missiles strikes against suspected terrorist operations in Sudan and Afghanistan.

Extremist Muslims were warning of retaliatory attacks against Americans.

The Southern Baptist International Mission Board (IMB), which maintains some 4,400 Southern Baptist personnel in 126 countries worldwide, issued a worldwide alert to each of its 14 regional offices Aug. 21.

"This is a very dangerous and crucial time for all of our people around the world," said Sam James, the board's vice president for creative leadership. "What we want is for all our missionaries to know that for the foreseeable future no American anywhere in the world is safe."

"There's no country we can

say now is beyond the reach of terrorism. Still, nowhere are we going to say let's shut down the work," he added.

Personnel in some areas where the strikes had intensified anti-American sentiment gathered in emergency meetings Aug. 21 to consider future ministry options and discuss temporarily leaving their posts, said Kenn Shirley, the board's Richmond-based associate regional leader for Central and Southern Asia.

"They are evaluating the situation to see where the Lord is leading and to decide what to do as a group, as well as individuals," he said.

IMB officials declined to comment on where these personnel were located specifically.

U.S. President Bill Clinton said he ordered the missile strikes to prevent terrorism promised as a follow-up to the Aug. 7 bombings of U.S. embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright called the attacks acts of self-defense. "I don't think we had a choice," she said. "These people hit us."

Approximately 70 of the computer- and radar-guided missiles, launched from U.S. ships and at least one submarine in the Arabian Sea and the Red Sea, demolished an alleged terrorist training camp in Afghanistan and a manufacturing plant in Sudan that U.S. officials have said produced a key ingredient for the manufacture of nerve gas.

"What I think is very important for the American people to understand is that there may, in fact, be retaliatory actions," Albright said. "We are very concerned about that."

The independent agency Crisis Consulting International (CCI) issued an advisory Aug. 21 warning missionaries of possible "rage- and fervor-inspired retaliatory attacks on local targets of convenience," such as U.S. citizens on streets.

The agency also cautioned mission agencies to take the embassy bombings as proof of a threat to "soft targets" far away from bases of terrorist activity.

"... Further retaliatory acts could occur literally anywhere in the world," CCI said. "The network of organizations and

fanatics most likely to engage in further acts can be found quite literally in almost every part of the world."

In an electronic advisory to regional offices, Bill Cashion, IMB's consultant for crisis management, asked the agency's personnel to take this danger "very seriously."

He encouraged them to review crisis-management plans, which include contingencies related to evacuation, hostage-taking, and home security.

Cashion asked Southern Baptists to pray that missionaries would know how to be alert to possible dangerous situations and not put themselves into unnecessary risk.

At the same time, he asked for prayer that they would possess a calmness of spirit and boldness to seize ministry opportunities to live and speak a witness for Jesus Christ.



## THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

# Record

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## Mississippi Baptists to convene Oct. 27-28

By Tim Nicholas  
MBCB Communications director

The 163rd annual session of the Mississippi Baptist Convention will take place Oct. 27-28, at First Church, Jackson, with the theme "Grow in Spiritual Power," according to Forrest Sheffield of Tupelo, chairman of the convention's order of business committee.

"We have some very wonderful exciting and gifted speakers enlisted who will be spread over the convention time who will provide lots of encouragement and good strong Bible preaching," Sheffield said.

Regular features of the convention include the president's address, the convention sermon, and a report from the executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB).

Dean Register, pastor of Temple Church, Hattiesburg, will deliver the president's address at 10:25 a.m. on Oct. 27.

Register is eligible for a second one-year term as president of the convention.

Richard Powell, pastor of Colonial Heights Church, Jackson, will deliver the convention sermon at 4:15 p.m. on Oct. 28. Chuck Pourciau, pastor of First Church, Louisville, is alternate preacher.

Newly-elected MBCB executive director

treasurer Jim Futral will be in charge of the Tuesday evening presentation.

Other featured speakers will be Jack Graham, pastor of Prestonwood Church, Dallas, who will speak at 11:15 a.m. on Oct. 27; and David Jeremiah, pastor of Shadow Mountain Community Church, El Cajon, Calif., and speaker for "Turning Point," radio program.

Each year a Bible scholar is invited to lead in a series of three devotionals called Bible Treasures.

This year's Bible Treasure speaker will be Bill Tolar, distinguished professor of biblical backgrounds and special consultant to the president, Southwestern Seminary, Fort Worth.

Tolar will speak on the morning and afternoon of Oct. 27, and on the morning of Oct. 28.

Music features of the convention include the sanctuary choir and orchestra of Temple Church, Hattiesburg; Boyd Tweedy, minister of music at Calvary Church, Petal and director of Cross Country Christian Entertainment; Myrna Loy Hedgepath of Jackson, music evangelist; the sanctuary choir of Colonial Heights Church, Jackson; Ronnie Cottingham of Lucedale, music evangelist; the Mississippi Singing Churchmen; the William Carey College Choir; and Kevin Williams of Clinton, student worship leader.

In addition to election of officers, the

convention will consider passage of a Cooperative Program budget for 1999, and any resolutions brought by messengers.

## MBC housing announced

Listed below are room rates of some of the motels easily accessible to downtown Jackson for the Mississippi Baptist Convention (prices do not include tax). Please mention that you will be attending the Mississippi Baptist Convention when making reservations.

**Cabot Lodge** \$69.00  
I-55 at County Line Rd.  
120 Dyess Rd., Ridgeland, MS 39157  
(601) 957-0757

flat rate for up to 4 people  
king-size or 2 double beds

**Cabot Lodge-Millsaps** \$66.00  
State St. at Woodrow Wilson \$70.00  
2375 North State, Jackson (includes complimentary breakfast)  
(601) 948-8650 or 1-800-874-4737

double beds or king  
king-size

**Coliseum Ramada Inn** \$55.00  
I-55 North (between Pearl & High St. exits)  
Jackson (601) 969-2141

flat rate for up to 4 people  
king or double beds

**Comfort Suites** \$63.00  
6485 I-55 N, Ridgeland  
(601) 977-6111

flat rate - single or double

**Edison Walthall** \$65.00  
225 E. Capitol, Jackson  
(601) 948-6161 \$75.00

single  
double

**Hampton Inn & Suites** \$72.00  
320 Greymont Ave., Jackson  
(601) 352-1700

flat rate - single or double  
(includes complimentary breakfast)

**Holiday Inn Express Hotel & Suites** \$65.00  
I-55 and High St., Jackson  
(formerly The Wilson Inn) (601) 948-4466

2 king-size beds  
(includes complimentary breakfast)

**Red Roof Inn Coliseum** \$39.99  
I-55 and High Street  
(601) 969-5006 \$46.99

flat rate - single  
flat rate - double  
(2nd person \$5 in single room - \$6 in double)

# Hemphill keynotes worship conference

By Joylin Davis  
Layout/Design Specialist

"Change for quality's sake or for the Great Commission's sake. Never change for change's sake," Kenneth Hemphill, president of Southwestern Seminary (SWBTS) in Ft. Worth, implored a crowd of around 100 pastors, music ministers, and other worship leaders Aug. 14 at the Baptist Building in Jackson.

Hemphill, along with Benjamin Harlan, dean of the school of church music at SWBTS, were leaders at the annual worship conference sponsored by the Witness Team of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB).

"The audience of worship is not the seeker or believer, but God," continued Hemphill, "and we must prepare ourselves for this worship."

"If casual dress will help reach a lost person, we should be willing to do it. However, your attire can affect your mental attitude."

Worshippers should have a "sense of awesomeness that this is a holy hour. The sovereign God of existence invites us to come into his presence with praise and thanksgiving," he added.

"At the heart of change is passion," noted Hemphill.

"To lead a church up from apathy and out of complacency, you must be passionate about your cause" of bringing the lost to Christ, he said.

Hemphill pointed out seven effective leadership strategies found in the Old Testament book of Nehemiah:

◆ Point the people to God.

"People are dying to see the work of the hand of the Lord."

Don't do God's business in your own ability. Be aware of the supernatural power of God."

◆ Sense passion, not program.

"Passion ignites. Nehemiah was willing to bear the burden for the lost."

◆ Cast a vision. "Vision focuses passion."

◆ Develop a strategy to accomplish the vision. "Vision without a plan is wishful thinking."

◆ Make the vision God has revealed to you the vision of the people.

"Move away from an us/them mentality. Nehemiah loved and served the people and led his people to join him."

◆ Endure and make it happen.

"No matter how great is the dream, someone won't like it and will tell you about it. Anticipate and respond to criticism, but don't come away from the work to negotiate pettiness."

◆ Lead the people in celebration and worship of the great and awesome God.

Harlan asserted that there are two misconceptions today about music: all great music was written before 1800; and all great music was written in the last 18 years.

One could frame a debate "that we now have five musical generations worshipping together," said Harlan.

"It seems we almost advertise our church based on worship style — liturgical, blended, contemporary, etc., he observed.

"Most of the issues dealing with music in the church aren't about what we do, but how we do it.

"I'd like to see a day when church musicians are proactive instead of reactive to the needs of the church and are on the forefront of creative energy," he said.

Harlan stressed the absolute importance of involving the congregation in singing. "Don't do anything with the choir that the congregation can do collectively," he said.

Harlan also emphasized that music in

church should be live whenever possible, and that people should be allowed to offer their gifts even if those are not perfect.

"Let people see a kid saw on a fiddle string or crack notes on a trumpet. Great things will start to happen when we are faithful to use what the Lord gives," he said.

On the issue of choruses versus hymns, Harlan pointed out that it is possible to incorporate both into effective worship.

"We live in an 'and' world, not an 'either/or' world. Find new frames to make us look differently at the same old picture," he said from the piano bench as he segued into a decidedly 90's-style interpretation of the classic hymn, "Holy, Holy, Holy."

Hemphill noted that change should take place slowly and lovingly.

"We should be prepared to hear God in different ways, but remember (the present style of worship) is how many people first encountered a holy God. Don't trample it," he warned.

"Use church leaders to initiate change," and let that change "come smoothly and naturally into the context of the service," Hemphill added.

Hemphill also pointed out that few believers have been taught the true meaning of worship.

"Preach, teach, and lead people to understand worship. Worship is to be at the heart of everything we do in the church.

"Our goal should never be to change a church, but to lead that church to obedience in worship," he said.

The date for the 1999 worship conference is Aug. 13.

For more information, contact the MBCB Church Music Department, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 968-3800 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.

Hemphill



Harlan

## Book, CD-ROM ease difficult Bible pronouncements

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — So your Sunday School teacher calls on you to read a few verses aloud. No problem!

You turn confidently in your contemporary translation to Judges 10. Suddenly, the request that seemed so easy a moment ago looks impossible.

Every other word looks like a foreign language.

There's Abimelech, Issachar, Tola, Puah, Dodo, Shamir, Ephraim, Jair and Gilead — and that's only through verse three.

Do you stumble through it, making up pronunciations the best you can? Make a joke and use "duh" for every word you don't have a clue about? Claim that your Bible doesn't have the Book of Judges and someone else will have to do the reading?

This fictional character could represent all Sunday School teachers, members, preachers, or professors who have found themselves in the position of needing to pronounce aloud from the Bible that which appears unpronounceable.

Broadman & Holman Publishers, a division of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention, released in 1997 "That's Easy for You to Say:

Your Quick Guide to Pronouncing Bible Names" by W. Murray Severance.

The book and accompanying CD-ROM include the pronunciations of more than 7,000 words.

When preparing a sermon, a lecture, or Sunday School lesson, persons can look up words from the alphabetized listing and find them spelled phonetically.

Using the CD-ROM, they can type in the word, see the phonetic spelling and hear it pronounced aloud.

Severance, a LifeWay retiree and longtime audiovisuals producer, said he got the idea for the first edition of the book when a Bible scholar and fellow employee stopped by his office one day several years ago.

He was about to tape a Sunday School lesson for radio and inquired about the pronunciation of an obscure Bible name. "He, like preachers, teachers,

and other lecturers, realized that a successful presentation depends as much on how materials are presented as on what is said," Severance wrote in his book's introduction.

"After I offered my opinion, it dawned on me that if an educator of his stature needed help, what about others with less training?"

The original version of Severance's book was released in 1983, with an expanded edition in 1994, followed by the CD-ROM version in 1997.

Severance acknowledges that the message of the Bible is more important than how the words are pronounced.

However, he emphasizes, "mispronunciation of any word always affects the listener's continuity of thought."

The variety of Bible translations in use today compounds

the problem of spelling and pronunciation, Severance says, noting that some names have five different spellings or spacings.

That's Easy for You to Say includes words and names from the Bible text as well as names of Bible books and hundreds of names and terms from biblical archaeology, cities, lakes, and rivers that appear in Bible reference books but not in the Bible text.

Severance realizes that some will disagree with pronunciations he has listed.

He describes the book as "a guide, not the final authority."

While the Sunday School class member called on spontaneously to read from Judges 10 would not be able to check pronunciations before tackling the passage, a savvy (and sympathetic) Sunday School teacher could plan ahead and write the difficult pronunciations on the board for the reader and all class members.

For the record, the names from Judges 10:1-3 are pronounced, according to Severance, as:

uh BIM uh lek; ISS uh kahr; TOH luu; PYOO uh; DOH duh; SHAY muhr; EE fra ihm; JAY uhr; and GIL ih uhd.

# Blue Mountain College expecting increase |

BLUE MOUNTAIN (Special) — Students arrived on campus at Blue Mountain College (BMC) this week to buildings undergoing renovation and two new faculty members, according to William N. Washburn, academic dean of the Baptist affiliated school in Tippah County.

BMC is a four-year woman's college

supported by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. A coordinated academic program for men preparing for church-related vocations is also offered.

BMC was founded in 1873 by Civil War General Mark Perrin Lowrey, and remained under the leadership of the Lowrey family until 1960 when Wilfred C. Tyler became president.

E. Harold F. Fisher assumed the presidency at Tyler's death in 1965 and continues to provide leadership today.

Two major renovations projects have been underway for many months, Washburn pointed out.

Come October, for the first time since 1990, upper classmen will be living in Whitfield Dorm. In addition, the Modern Lowrey Berry Auditorium in the Lawrence

Lowrey Administration building has undergone a complete renovation.

Two new faculty members will welcome incoming students.

Longtime New Albany educator Rita Ann West joins BMC as the director of elementary education.

West has 35 years experience as a public school teacher and has won numerous teaching awards, according to Washburn. She holds an undergraduate degree from Millsaps College in Jackson and the education specialist degree from the University of Mississippi in Oxford.

Also joining the faculty is Harold E. Arnold as the head of the department of psychology.

A native of Florida, Arnold has a Ph.D. in educational psychology from the University of Mississippi and has served as a bivocational pastor, Washburn said.

Washburn indicated that the faculty and staff of BMC are anticipating another strong Fall enrollment — after the previous year's record of over 480 students.

"Last year, our elementary education program and Bible program showed the largest increases," he said.

Washburn attributed the growth in enrollment to the dedication and high quality of the faculty at BMC.

For more information on BMC academic programs, contact the school at Blue Mountain College, Blue Mountain, MS 38610. Telephone: (601) 685-4771.



WELCOME — Academic Dean William Washburn (right) welcomes Ron Norvell, a first time student at Blue Mountain College. Norvell is associate pastor for youth and children at West Ripley Church, Ripley. Before answering the call to the ministry, Norvell worked for the Dover Elevator Company. (Photo by Carl M. White)

## Humorist Jerry Clower dies

Mississippi native Jerry Clower, 71, internationally-acclaimed country humorist and devoted Southern Baptist, died August 24 at Mississippi Baptist Medical Center in Jackson from cardio-respiratory failure after undergoing heart bypass surgery five days earlier.

Clower missed an Aug. 4 performance in Georgia, his first cancellation in 32 years, when he fell ill and returned to Mississippi for medical consultation. Doctors performed six bypasses during heart surgery on Aug. 20.

Clower rose to comedy fame in the late 1960s and early 1970s while living in Yazoo City and selling fertilizer for the late Owen Cooper — Mississippi Chemical Company founder and the last layman to serve as president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Clower, a devout Christian who



Clower

explained his second career as, "I don't tell funny stories; I tell stories funny," publicly vowed never to perform humor that could not be repeated in church.

Clower was baptized along with his wife Homerline at the age of 13 in the East Fork River in Amite County. The couple returned several years ago from Yazoo City to their roots in Amite County and rejoined their ancestral church, East Fork Church near Liberty.

The Clowers were married for 51 years, and in addition to his wife he is survived by four children and a number of grandchildren.

Clower never sought to conceal his Christianity. "I am convinced that there is only one place where there is no laughter, and that's hell. I have made arrangements to miss hell. Praise God I won't ever have to be anywhere that there ain't no laughter," he once said.

## Analysis: FAITH leads way to Great Commission

By Jim Butler, Pastor  
Trinity Church, Southaven

Part one of a two-part series

Every church and every pastor has heard about the Great Commission found in Matthew 28:19-20.

If asked, we all would say that it is our local church's responsibility to reach the lost of its community.

However, the facts show that we are doing a very poor job of winning the lost and baptizing them in obedience to Christ's command.

Over the past 15 years the total baptisms reported by our 40,000 Southern Baptist churches have been statistically flatlined.

The 1996 Uniform Church Letter reports showed that over 10,000 churches reported no baptisms and more than 13,000 reported fewer than five baptisms. The median church in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) baptized five people in 1995.

In Mississippi we were even lower than the SBC with a median of only four baptisms.

What has gone wrong? Our commission is to win souls, our purpose is to win souls, and our desire is to win souls.

Our new SBC president, Paige Patterson, has challenged us to baptize 1,000,000 people in the year 2000.

How will we ever reach this

goal? There is one way, and all we need is FAITH.

We need faith the size of a mustard seed. We need the faith of Hebrews 11:1. The faith we need to win our world to Christ is FAITH Sunday School Evangelism.

This FAITH will teach our pastors and lay leaders how to effectively share their faith with their unchurched community.

It is a simple, yet powerful, tool. It is a new joint venture between the LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention and the North American Mission Board.

It is our best hope of fulfilling the Great Commission.

What is FAITH? It is a 16-week training in personal evangelism. It is an acrostic which stands for Forgiveness, Available, Impossible, Turn, and Heaven.

The entire outline can be presented in about six minutes, making this the simplest of all the formal gospel presentations.

The outline is easy to learn, simple to present, and powerful as God applies it to the hearts of those who are lost.

Trinity Church in Southaven was selected to be one of the 28 "originator churches" to pilot this new personal evangelism approach.

Brett Burleson, Trinity Church's minister of evangelism, and I trained 54 members of Trinity Church in FAITH in

the first cycle this Spring.

Over 100 new FAITH trainees have participated in the fall cycle which began in August.

Trinity Church will host a national FAITH Training Clinic October 12-15 this year.

Pastors who would like to use FAITH Sunday School Evangelism in their churches should contact Al Riddley at

Lifeway Christian Resources, 127 Ninth Avenue, North, Nashville, TN 37234; or call Trinity Church in Southaven, at (601) 349-3333.

Space at Trinity Church's October seminar is limited.

Enrollment is on a first come, first served basis, so please act quickly if you plan to attend the Trinity Church seminar.

## New 'Vessels' videotape to be released

A new edition of Vessels, a 30-minute video magazine about Mississippi Baptists, will be available Sept. 1 for churches and associations, according to Farrell Blankenship, director of the Broadcast Services Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB). Tapes are also available in broadcast format for churches that have television ministries.

Hosted by Roland and Lisa Leavell, members of First Church, Jackson, the new edition of Vessels has five segments featuring aspects of Mississippi Baptists helping to bring Mississippi and the world to Jesus.

The first segment tells of a mission blitz in Tunica County, once known as the poorest county in the United States.

Tunica County is now home to a multi-million dollar casino industry. Yet, abject poverty continues to plague this area of rich Delta farmland. The segment shows how Mississippi Baptists banded with other local churches to bear a witness for Christ.

The second segment chronicles a Brotherhood project where volunteers from all across the state came together to help build Old Rice Road Church in Madison County.

A first-time event this summer at Gulfshore Assembly in Pass Christian was the Older Children's retreat, held in July. The new retreat was so popular that it filled up shortly after registration opened in February.

One of Mississippi's best-kept secrets is the All-State Youth Choir and Orchestra, videotaped live in concert after touring the state early this summer. These 100-plus young people are both talented and enthusiastic in their commitment to music and to the Lord.

The final segment, filmed in the scenic state of Colorado, features the work of seven of the 14 Mississippi Baptist Student Union summer missionaries serving in that state this summer.

Copies of Vessels are mailed to directors of missions, state Woman's Missionary Union and Brotherhood leaders, and MBCB members. The videotape is ideal for presenting in its entirety or only a few segments at a time at mission meetings, prayer meetings, or during worship services.

For more information, contact Farrell Blankenship at the MBCB Broadcast Services Department, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 968-3800, or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.

## Vessels

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## JUST FOR THE RECORD



**Four former pastors** and the current pastor of Clarksdale Church, North Delta Association, were together for the centennial celebration on August 2. Pictured from the left are: Carl M. White, pastor from 1991 - 1996; S. M. (Rocky) Henriques, Jr., pastor from 1985 - 1990; Lucius Marion, pastor from 1961 - 1984; Carman Sharpe, pastor from 1954 - 1961; Bruce Willis, current pastor. (BP special photo)

**New Home Church, Fulton,** will hold its Fifth Sunday Singing on Aug. 30. Lunch will be served. Singing will start at 1 p.m. with The Master's Quartet, Booneville. Mike Bridges is pastor.

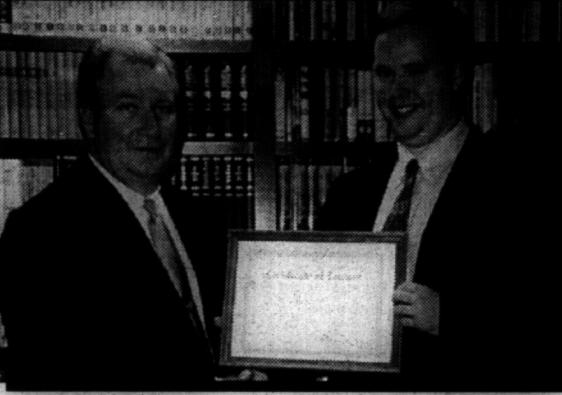
**Hopewell Church, Scott County,** recently celebrated its 150th anniversary. Richard Ethridge of the Mississippi Historical Committee presented the church with a plaque. Mark McDonald is pastor.



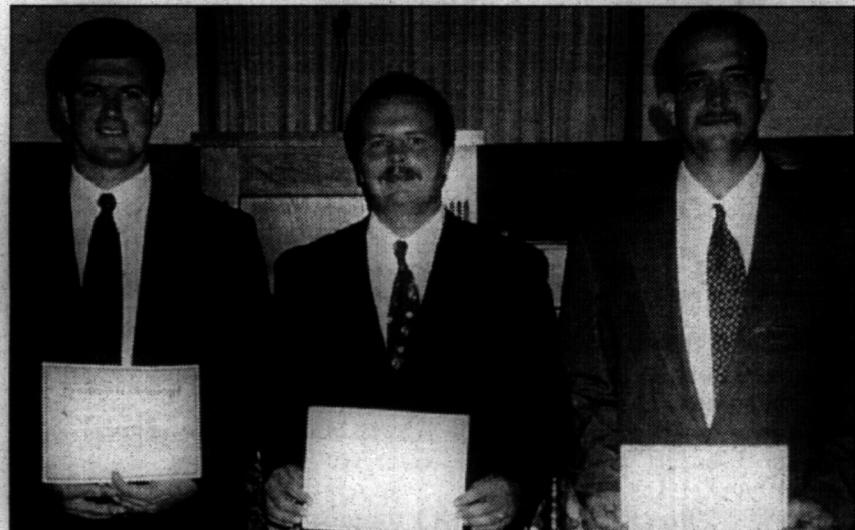
**Morrison Heights Church, Clinton,** ladies softball team has won the State Baptist Class AAA Championship. The state tournament was recently held in Jackson with churches from throughout the state participating. Pictured (front row, from left) are Mina Darnell, Lee Ann Purnell, Laura Bivins, Shannon Boyd, Beth Ferris, and Sonny Jones, coach; (back row) Randy Riley, assistant coach, Dale Dewett, Becky Flowers, Joan Arledge, Kim Riley, Jenny Edwards, Jennifer Steele, and Sharon Staton. Not pictured is Chris Purnell, assistant coach.

## NAMES IN THE NEWS

**Ryan Culpepper** received his license to preach on July 19 at New Hope Church, Meridian. He is now a student at Southwestern Seminary (as of Aug. 19) to begin work on his degree in church planting. Pictured with Culpepper (right) is Randall Creel, pastor.



Creel and Culpepper



**Fairfield Church, Moselle,** ordained three deacons on Aug. 9. Pictured (from left) are Anthony Hutchison, Charles Odom, and Steve Gill. Ricky Trull is pastor.

## NOBTS announces graduates

Commencement exercises were held at New Orleans Seminary on July 24. Graduates with Mississippi connections are:

Receiving the Master of Divinity degree were Riley Brown, Jackson, minister of youth and activities at First Church Eupora; William A. Hawks, Bradenton, Fla., married to the former Leigh Ann Gordon of Houston; Rex Terrell, Orlando, Fla., formerly from Meadville; Grant McElveen, Bogalusa, La., pastor of Antioch Church, Florence; Lawrence Scott Hanberry, Hattiesburg; and John Edward Wren, Tupelo. Terry Joe Edwards, Amory, received the Associate in Pastoral Ministries degree.

## BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS

**The Landscape and Wildlife Paintings** of Joel T. Callahan will be featured at William Carey College in the Lucile Parker Gallery. The opening reception honoring the artist will be held 5-6:30 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 27. This exhibit can be viewed during the regular gallery hours, 1-4 p.m., Mon.-Fri., or by appointment, (601) 582-6192. Injured in an airplane crash in 1994 which took

the life of his wife Madeline, Callahan, a Meridian gastroenterologist, suffered second and third degree burns over 80% of his body, permanent eye damage, and leg and hip fractures. After recovering at Methodist Rehabilitation Center, he returned to his medical practice and to his art studio. "I enjoyed painting before the accident," he said, "But after the accident, it became a means of therapy."

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**REVIVAL DATES**

**Cedar Grove, Columbia:** Aug. 30-Sept. 2; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; lunch following a.m. service; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Sonny Adkins, director, Evangelism Department, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, evangelist; Ronnie Cottingham, music; Mike Grenn, pastor.

**McLaurin Heights, Pearl:** Aug. 30-Sept. 2; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 11:30 a.m. (with lunch provided) and 7 p.m.; Curtis L. Williams, former pastor, speaker; W. C. Dobbs, music; J. Steve Jackson, pastor; Eric McNair, minister of music; for more information call (601) 939-3379.

**New Home, Fulton:** Sept. 13-16; Sunday, regular times; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Stanley Huddleston, Falkner, evangelist; Jerry Brazile, Fulton, music; Mike Bridges, pastor.

## VBS RESULTS

**Mt. Moriah (Lincoln):** June 8-12 for children and July 27-30 for youth; 104 enrolled; average

attendance was 96; five professions of faith; Danny Moss, pastor; Susie Rippy, VBS director.



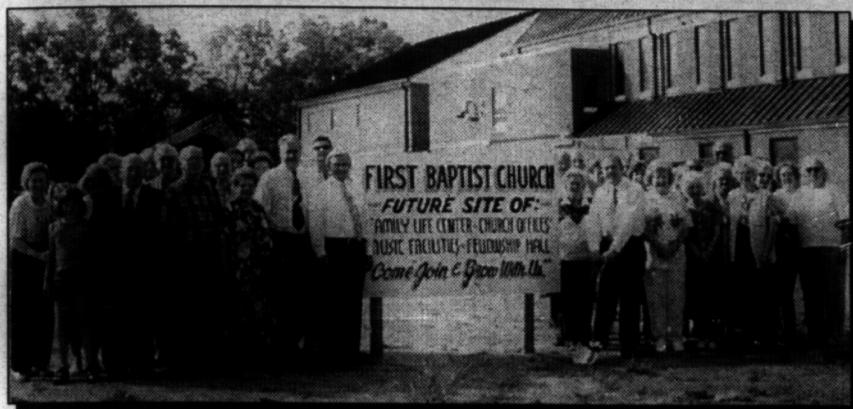
**Country Woods, Jackson:** 211 enrolled; five professions of faith; children (pictured) presented a musical for the conclusion; Kathy Rankin and Lisa Smith, directors.

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## JUST FOR THE RECORD



**First Church, Waynesboro**, held ground breaking for its proposed multi-purpose building on Aug. 11. This new 20,000 square feet building will include a fellowship hall, a kitchen, a recreational gym and game room, a choir practice and changing area, new staff offices, and future educational space. Attending the ground breaking ceremony were DeJuan Walley, pastor; Wayne Meeks, minister of music; Scott Herrin, minister of youth and activities; building committee members: Bob Joiner, Frank Johnston, Robert Knight, and June Stephenson; Larry Drennan, foreman of James Reeves Construction, Laurel; and numerous church members.

**Pope Church, Pope**, will celebrate the completion of its remodeled building with a dedication ceremony on Aug. 30. There will be a morning service only. Sunday School will begin at 9:45 a.m. and worship at 10:45 a.m. A covered dish lunch will be served in fellowship hall following worship services. Jimmy Bryant is pastor.

**Ransom** will be in concert at Louin Church, Louin, Aug. 30 at 6 p.m. The group is composed of Hal Gardner, Michael Roberts, and Mark Upshaw, all of Waynesboro. Jason Graffagnino is pastor.

**Fall Festival** will be held at Flowood Church, Flowood, Sept. 19, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

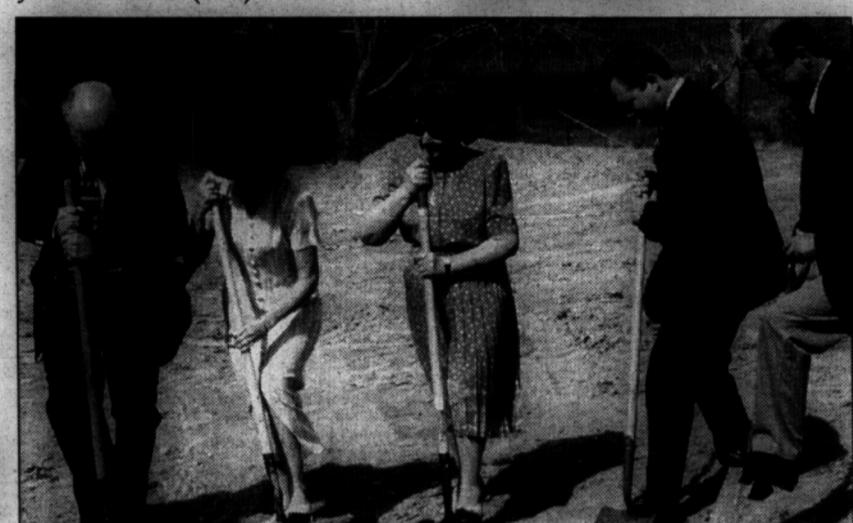


**New Life Church, Leaf**, sent eight boys and their leader to Central Hills Retreat, Kosciusko, from July 13-17. Pictured (front row, from left) are Trey Pugh, Dennis Kitterell, Bill Breland, Terry Cochran, Andrew Sellers, Billy Jack Dickson, and Jon McLendon; (back row) Scott Sellers, and Walter Sellers, leader.

**Precept Ministries Institute of Training** for students, potential leaders, or current leaders will be held Oct. 1, 2, and 3, at First Church, Jackson. The Institute is sponsored by Precept Ministries of Chattanooga, Tenn. Founded in 1970 by Jack and Kay Arthur, Precept Ministries has a worldwide reputation for accurate, in-depth Bible study methods with powerful application of biblical principles. Introduction to Precept Bible Study will be held from 7-9 p.m. on Sept. 29 with Johnny Tatum, leader. Registration will begin at 8:30 a.m. on Oct. 1. If interested in attending the Precept Ministries Institute of Training, contact Jean Greer at (601) 956-4706.



**Wynndale Church, Terry**, recently held an Acteen award ceremony to honor five young ladies who achieved the goal of queen. Pictured, (back row, from left) are Carlee Griffing; Judy Griffing, leader; Amber Hartzog; Taryn Foshee; Shanna Hartzog; Kathleen Foshee, leader; and (front row) Genie Ross.



**Wynndale Church, Terry**, held a ground breaking ceremony for a 20,000 square foot multi-purpose building in March 1998. This building will contain Sunday School space, commercial kitchen, and fellowship/activity/worship space. Pictured (from left) are Senator Richard White, Nelda Moore, Doris Kemp, Mike Smith, and Bill Buck. Other members not pictured are Ronnie Carmical, John Green, Deborah Douglas, Robert Jordan, Richard Matthews, Tom Scruggs, Tock Shelton, Mike Yates, and Tommy Weathersby.

**Philadelphia Church, Etta**, celebrated its 150th anniversary during the 1997 church year. Under the leadership of Jerry Moore, pastor, various activities were held throughout the year. Former pastors and their families were invited to speak concerning

their time at Philadelphia Church. The final grand celebration was held in October. Special music was presented by One Accord and Candy Patterson. Pat Lamar, mayor of the city of Oxford, presented a proclamation to the church. Don Stanfill, director of missions for Lafayette County, presented the church with a plaque on behalf of the Mississippi Baptist Historical Commission. In November, a steeple was added to the church by three members of the Kilgore family.

## Staff Changes

**Bethel Church, Smith County**, has called **Dave Morehead** as youth director effective July 16. A native of Forest, Morehead is a senior at Mississippi College.



A group of 46 people from Cleary Church, Florence, children to adults, took part in a week-long mission trip to help build a home, along with the Cumberland College Mountain Outreach program, in the hills of eastern Kentucky, June 14-20. Groups have been going to Williamsburg for the last 14 years. This year, the women and children, went out into the community to conduct Vacation Bible Schools, while the men built the home. At the end of the week, the group held a dedication ceremony and presented the future tenants with a Bible. Mountain Outreach is a Cumberland College program, which began in 1982, to aid needy people in the Appalachian area.



**Actees of Liberty Church, Union Association**, recently held a mission fair for the GAs, RAs, and Mission Friends. Pictured (from left) are Wendy Kidd, Amanda Barton, Kellie Pickens, Jenny Tate, Christy Murrah, Samantha Huffstatler, and Emily Fitzgerald. Allie Scott is not pictured.

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## JUST FOR THE RECORD



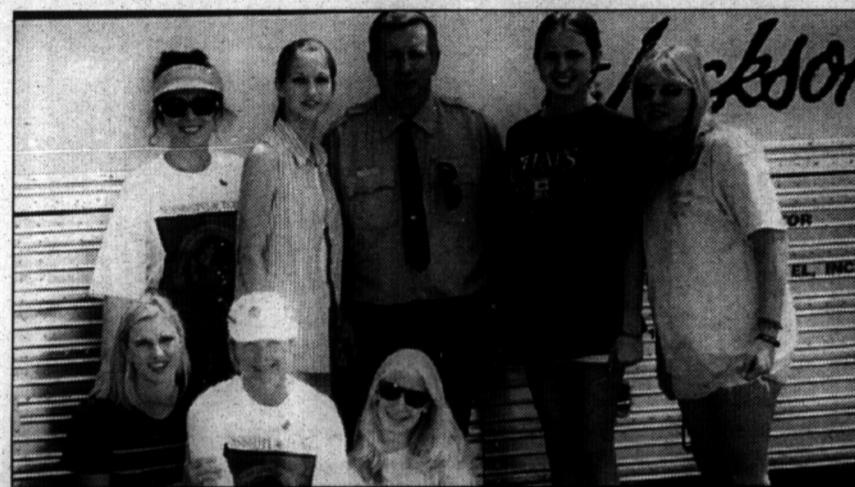
### Layman gets missions wish

**SIMPSONVILLE, S.C. (BP)** — Carman Leroy Cox, a 15-year veteran of short-term mission trips, told his friends that he wanted to die on the mission field. The Baptist layman got his wish when he died of a heart attack July 10 while in Bucharest on a Romania mission trip. He was 75.

Cox, a member of First Church, Simpsonville, S.C., and his wife of 50 years, Mary Frances, were in Romania with a team of 19 volunteers. He preached his last sermon at a Baptist church in Cernavoda.

Cox was active in home missions as well. He was instrumental in planting and developing mission churches in Missouri, Illinois, and Indiana. He and his wife also helped in Baptist Student Union work in Kentucky, Missouri and Illinois.

Youth group of Auburn Church, Tupelo, recently went on a mission trip to Phenix City, Ala. They taught Vacation Bible School and did maintenance work on Russell Baptist Center. The Center helps the homeless in the community with food, shelter, and clothing. Pictured (front row, from left) are secretary of Russell Baptist Center, Charlie Tucker, Charlene Davis, and missionary from Kentucky; (second row) missionary from Kentucky, April Hicks, Eric Baker, Teresa Alred, Lacy Malone, Donney Pearce, and Billy Kyle; (third row) Donny Ratliff, Terry Ramey, youth minister, Scott Emison, John Mark Webb, Justin Alred, Kirk Green, and Joyclyn Carrell, Russell Baptist Center director.



Acteens from Robinwood Church, Saucier, attended the National Acteens Convention in Louisville, Ky., July 1-4. The Acteens were among those assigned to do clean-up work in the inner city area of Louisville. Pictured (front row, from left) are Kim Gillis, apprentice Acteens leader; Paulette Reed, assistant Acteens leader; Rachel Allen, missions learning leader; (back row) Deborah Gilbert, Acteens director; Annie Gillis, missions lifestyle leader; McBeth, bus driver; Shelene Ladner; and Michelle Worden, missions involvement leader. Robinwood Church has just completed its first year of the Acteens program and all five Acteens had achieved the Queen level of the Acteens StudiAct program.

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Baptist Health Systems' Pastoral Care Program recently trained 10 new pastoral care specialists, honoring the program's graduates in a symbolic commissioning ceremony. Another Pastoral Care Specialist program is scheduled for October. For more information, call Barry Click, director, at (601) 973-1697. The graduates, representing ministers from a variety of faiths, (pictured, from left) are John Tate, Jackson; Charles Poole, Jackson; Jerry Talley, Jackson; Terry Martinez, Madison; John Huber, Bay Springs; Howard Tucker, Richland; Cliff Shipp, Jackson; John Pulley, Jackson; Robert Lucas, Jackson; Bruce Taylor, Jackson; Tommy May, Pelahatchie; Bill McAlilly, Jackson; Click; and Ron Crudup, Jackson.



Parkway Church, Hernando, celebrated the first of its three phase building project with a special ground breaking ceremony following Sunday morning worship service on Aug. 9. The first phase, which was paid in full, should be completed by Christmas. Included are Sunday School classrooms and rest rooms. Phase two will feature a kitchen, fellowship hall, and additional classrooms. The third phase will be the construction of a new sanctuary.

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**BIVOCATIONAL MINISTER OF MUSIC.** Send resumes to Gunter Road Baptist Church, 110 Old Highway 49 S. Richland, MS 39218 or call 932-4134 or 939-2542.

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## TEACH BY EXAMPLE

Editor:

Our America, "Land of the Free and Home of the Brave," faces a heart-and-mind boggling, most cowardly threat.

Witness the deadly, premeditated ambush of four schoolmates and an expectant teacher by two boys, aged 11 and 13, this past March 24 outside a school in Jonesboro, Ark.

On April 24, a 14-year-old boy shot and killed a male teacher and wounded three people at a school dance in Edinboro, Pa. Sadly, there are others.

We Americans must nip in the bud any such future killings or maimings. Example is the only way to teach!

Let us remember, "By mercy and truth, iniquity is purged; and by the fear of the Lord, men depart from evil." (Pro. 16:6.)

In Jesus' name, we ask God to love all others through us as much as he loves us, and to bless all homes so that he might be glorified to the eternal utmost. "And God says, 'Ah, finally you have the right idea.'" (Unknown, adapted).

## HOECOMINGS

**Moak's Creek, Summit:** 128th anniversary; Aug. 30; 11 a.m.; covered dish in fellowship hall; 1:15 p.m., dedication of new fellowship hall; Billy J. Howse, pastor, speaker; Marshall McLaughlin, music.

**First, Polkville:** Aug. 30; 11 a.m.; noon meal; singing at 1:30 p.m.; Duncan Sisters, guest singers; dedication of multi-purpose building in afternoon; Paul Wilson, Tupelo, guest speaker; Mark Beam, pastor.

**Gamari Road, Greenville:** Sept. 13; 10:30 a.m.; John Hollowell, former member, speaker; lunch at noon in fellowship hall; followed by singing in afternoon featuring New Born, gospel singing group from Carthage.

**Wheeler (Prentiss):** Centennial; Sept. 27; 11 a.m.; covered dish at noon; speakers will be older people sharing stories; Terry Hall, pastor.

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To God be all the glory!

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9).

"Is anything too hard for the Lord? . . ." (Gen. 18:14).

"Ah Lord God! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by the great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee." (Jer. 32:17).

"Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh: is there anything too hard for me?" (Jer. 32:27).

Joan Myers  
Hattiesburg

## LAST ACT OF APOSTASY?

Editor:

I commend Pastor Keith Powell, Oakcrest Church, Baton Rouge, La., for the courage he exhibited in his letter to the editor titled, "Beware Alliances," published in the August 13 issue.

Powell said that the current leadership is all too ready to form alliances with other denominations and para-church organizations which are

far from orthodox doctrine.

As cases in point, he cites the ecumenism of the Southern Baptist Convention with such groups as Roman Catholics, Promise Keepers, Pentecostals, and Charismatics.

Roman Catholicism is a system of religious worship especially with reference to its rites and ceremonies, and it is considered to be a false religious system by some.

No Bible-believing Christian has any business getting entangled religiously or politically with Roman Catholicism.

It appears that the last act of apostasy is now taking place. It is the result of the Pentecostal-Charismatic Movement.

The word "charismatic" comes from the Greek word "charisma" which means "gifted."

Charismatics believe themselves to be more "gifted" than the average Christian.

The Bible tells us what to think of those who brag about gifts they don't have (Prov. 25:14).

It also tells us what to think of people who profess to have the apostolic gifts (signs and wonders, II Cor. 12:12) but who don't have them (Rev. 2:2).

The Bible calls these people liars.

To you born-again Christians who are caught up in these ungodly movements, the Bible says in Rev. 18:4, "...Come out of her, my people..."

Bennett Blanton  
Houston

## SEARCHING FOR PASTOR

Editor:

The Pastor Search Committee of Jakarta International Baptist Church (JIBC) in Jakarta, Indonesia, is currently seeking qualified individual to serve the Lord as pastor of our church.

This is an exciting position that will offer many new and unique challenges as we work to fulfill God's will in Indonesia.

Stephen C. Reynolds, president and CEO of Baptist Memorial Health Care Corporation, Memphis, has announced a new alignment of top management.

This new alignment will place the leadership of the corporation under Robert S. Gordon, who will serve as chief administrative officer (CAO), and David C. Hogan, who will serve as chief operating officer (COO). Gordon, a native of Louisville, Ky., will manage

JIBC is an English-speaking congregation composed of people of all nationalities.

The paid staff consists of the pastor/elder position, a bilingual Indonesian secretary, a bilingual Indonesian accountant, and beginning in December of 1998, a music/youth minister as well.

At this point, we ask that interested parties submit only resumes either via fax or the Internet:

Fax: (62-21) 724-6268  
E-mail: <w e e m s j k t -@rad.net.id> or: <muck-man1@rad.net.id>

Philip Weems  
Pastor Search Comm. Chair  
Jakarta Int. Baptist Church

## PROUD OF MISSISSIPPI

Editor:

I continue to be excited but not surprised with Mississippi Baptists leading the way in the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions.

Though this is totally consistent with who Mississippi Baptists have always been, it is encouraging to see the pattern continue in a time when there are unprecedented opportunities and response to the Gospel all over the world.

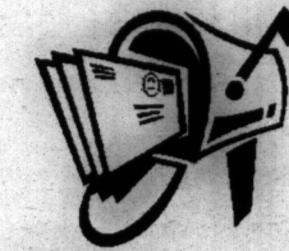
It is particularly noteworthy to see the churches who have long carried the torch continue sacrificial giving and be joined by churches whose vision for the world is more recent.

Mississippi Baptists have once again affirmed their confidence in the Lottie Moon Offering for International Missions as a channel for their global concern.

As a Mississippian, to say that I am proud of our state is a gross understatement.

Thank you to pastors and church mission leaders, and to state convention and association leaders. What a team effort.

Lewis Myers, Vice-President International Mission Board Richmond, VA



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.

Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.

Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.

When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.



Gordon



Hogan

## Baptist-Memphis sets new structure

system support functions, such as Information Systems, Legal, Managed Care, Finance, Marketing, Human Resources, Strategic Planning, and Resource Management.

Hogan, a native of Union City, Tenn., will manage the overall operations of Baptist's internal division, or markets that are responsible for the delivery of health care across the Mid-South which will include north Mississippi.



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1. Lord, I admit that I need you.  
*(I have sinned.)*
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death.  
*(I repent.)*
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you.  
*(I believe in Jesus.)*
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with him.  
*(I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)*

*But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name (John 1:12).*

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.



Uzbekistan

republic would have trouble meeting the new requirements for registering or re-registering, according to an Aug. 7 report by European Baptist Press Service (EBPS).

The requirements, which Walter and Coffey said could lead to discriminatory treatment of some religious groups, include reporting a church membership of no less than 100 Uzbeks and paying a fee equivalent to \$350, EBPS reported.

The law, passed in May,

festivals and the agency's On Mission '98 conference Aug. 1-6 at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Conference Center.

The new approach is based on four "on mission" principles that also are at the core of the new NAMB flagship magazine, "On Mission."

The principles were the primary emphasis of the On Mission '98 conference, which previously was known as North American Mission Board Week. An on-mission Christian, according to the concept, is:

- spiritually awakened to the need for joining God in his mission of reconciling the world to himself through Jesus Christ.
- continually adjusting, making the changes necessary in order to join God in his mission.
- evangelistically active, becoming personally involved in seeing people come to faith in Christ on a regular basis — whether across the street, across the country or in another country.
- a passionate advocate, encouraging other Christians — as an outgrowth of their own excitement at finding their personal fit for joining God in his mission — to become awakened as they themselves have been. The cycle then is repeated through the lives of others, and the number of on-mission Christians is multiplied.

In NAMB's published mission education materials — which include magazines,

videotapes, and curriculum that are usable in a variety of different venues — the emphasis will be on developing the on-mission principles. Missionaries will serve as examples of how those principles are at work.

NAMB was assigned the role of missions education during the 1997 reorganization of Southern Baptist Convention agencies.

The new agency inherited the missions education programs of the former Brotherhood Commission, and its new adult program is being called Missions in Motion.

In addition to the formal organizations, however, NAMB hopes to encourage churches to develop "On Mission Teams."

Although similar in concept to a previous model for missions development councils, On Mission Teams would include representatives from all areas of the church that contribute to building "on mission" Christians.

Additional materials on developing and incorporating on-mission principles in the life of the church can be found in On Mission magazine, available free through the North American Mission Board by calling toll-free (800) 233-1123, or by signing up on the magazine's Internet site, [www.onmission.com](http://www.onmission.com).

A book offering suggestions on developing an effective On Mission Team will be available through NAMB this winter.

## Uzbekistan's new religion law drawing protest

HAMBURG, Germany (BP) — A letter protesting Uzbekistan's new religion law has been sent to the nation's government from the European Baptist Federation (EBF) general secretary, Karl Heinz Walter, and president, David Coffey, asking the religious freedom of Uzbek citizens be upheld.

Baptists in the former Soviet

went into effect before groups such as the Baptists had seen it, according to Pavel A. Peychev, president of the Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists of Middle Asia, EBPS reported.

"Membership in Baptist churches is only possible by a personal decision and confession of faith in Jesus Christ and not by birth. Therefore the number of membership in Baptist churches is relatively small," the EBF leaders wrote.

By comparison, the former Soviet law allowed registration of churches with 20 or more members, Walter and Coffey wrote.

Concerning the registration fee, smaller groups with members who have low-paying jobs or on pensions would have a hard time getting together such an amount, the EBPS report noted, adding historically evangelicals have been barred from higher education and higher-paying jobs. At the moment, pensioners receive the equivalent of \$25 a month, EBPS reported.

Local churches cannot import Christian literature or other materials, or establish schools for Christian education, under the provisions of the new law, EBPS reported.

Only religious centers such as unions will be allowed these functions, but the unions must also register or re-register.

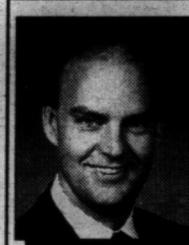
To do so, the Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists in Middle Asia, for example, must report no fewer than eight congregations in eight different parts of Uzbekistan.

Because of the small sizes of the churches and their financial inability to pay registration

fees, finding eight churches in eight different areas could be difficult, EBPS reported.

The EBF leaders called on

the Uzbek government to make the legal changes needed to ensure religious freedom for all religious groups in Uzbekistan.



## LifeAnswers

Ron Mumbower, Ph.D.  
Minister of Counseling  
First Church, Jackson

*My seventh-grader is so negative about school. How can I change his attitude?*

Adolescence can be a stressful time as a child begins the demanding transition to adulthood. Seventh-graders tend to be negative because so many things are changing so rapidly — their bodies, emotions, peer relationships, schools, and even their outlook on your parenting. Don't be reactive, and don't put him down. Listen and offer alternatives to his problems. Remember what it was like when you were in the same situation. Begin to allow him to make his own decisions, with the understanding that when he falls you will be there to help him up. Be supportive. Don't compare or condemn. Offer consistent praise in areas where he succeeds. Most important of all, pray for your son without ceasing. With all society's messages about what he is supposed to be, he

needs to be reminded that he is a child of the Father.

*With all the talk about adultery, what should a parent tell his/her children?*

Marriage is a picture of Christ's love for his bride — the church — and the fact that he gave himself for his bride. He did not adulterate himself by taking any other gods. People make mistakes and adultery is not the unpardonable sin, but it does serve to seriously weaken the covenant to which a man and a woman commit when they are married before God. Children should be taught sexual abstinence, and parents must model purity in their marital relationship through holiness, love, and honor for their partner. The culture in which we live provides an excellent opportunity for parents to explain the value of committed, Christ-like love that puts the needs of others before self.

*Send your counseling questions to LifeAnswers c/o The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Please be brief. Name is not required. Remember: in time of crisis, your pastor can make recommendations on your counseling needs.*

## LIFE AND WORK

### Living by faith or by sight?

**Jer. 31:33-34; 32:1-3, 6-7, 8b-9, 13-15, 21-22**

**By Kevin Hand**

On October 24, 1929, the collapse of the U.S. stock market began. A few days later, known as Black Tuesday, the damage was extended. Over the next few years our nation sank into the Great Depression. Banks and businesses failed, prices dropped, and one-fourth of the labor force was out of work. The economic catastrophe brought massive poverty and hunger. The crash of the stock market meant financial ruin for many investors, some of whom took their own lives.

One can only imagine the horror of losing financial security, being rich one day and poor the next. We all seek as much securi-

ty as possible: financial security, job security, national security, and more. However, none of these things is permanently secure.

Some people place their ultimate trust in God and his promises. They take God at his word, and walk by faith, not by sight. They base their faith on the faithfulness of God in keeping his past promises. God's faithfulness should strengthen believers' sense of security in turbulent times.

Jeremiah's final days continued to be no less turbulent than those of the survivors of Jerusalem's fall. How did he keep the faith? How was he able to maintain his hope in the ultimate



Hand

fulfillment of promises he would never live to see?

Jeremiah's hope, like biblical hope in general, was based on God's long-range purposes for his people, not on seeing these purposes completed during his lifetime. Thus Jeremiah could live in hope of the return to Jerusalem and of the new covenant, even though he knew that he would live to see neither of these.

**Visible sources of security will fail (32:1-3).** Zedekiah had imprisoned Jeremiah for predicting that the besieging Babylonian army would capture Jerusalem. During that time, the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah.

Even as the visible means of Jerusalem's security failed, so all visible sources of security will someday fail those who trust in them. Therefore, we must invest in heavenly trea-

sure which is secure and will never lose its value (Matt. 6:20).

**Faith sees beyond the apparent (32:6-7, 8b-9, 13-15).** The Lord told Jeremiah that Hanamel, his relative, would offer to sell him a field. Acting on the Lord's instructions, Jeremiah bought the field. He acted publicly so the people would know what he had done. Jeremiah instructed Baruch to place the deed in a clay pot for safekeeping because the time would come when houses and fields would again be bought in the land.

When situations seem hopeless, faith enables God's people to look beyond the apparent and to trust God to fulfill his promises. We can know that God is working on our behalf, and that he causes all things to work together for our good (Rom. 8:28).

**God has kept his past promises (32:21-22).** In his prayer, Jeremiah praised God for fulfilling past promises by

delivering the Israelites from Egypt and leading them into the promised land.

Because of God's faithfulness in keeping past promises, believers can trust that God will fulfill all of his promises, even when they cannot see that he is doing anything. Because God is unchanging (Heb. 13:8), we can know that what he has done in the past, he will do now and in the future.

**God's promises are not limited to the present (31:33-34).** Through Jeremiah, God promised a new covenant. It would be characterized by a law written in the heart, by all the people knowing God personally, and by God forgiving their sins.

Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of God's promise of the new covenant (Luke 22:20; Heb. 8:7-13). By receiving the new life in Christ, we have hope, security, and life without end.

*Hand is pastor of First Church, Magee.*

## EXPLORE THE BIBLE

### Live by high standards

**2 Peter 3:3-15a**

**By William H. Sims, III**

On April 14, 1912, the Titanic was crossing the Atlantic Ocean on her maiden voyage, on a journey to America. At 11:40 p.m. the Titanic struck an iceberg that created a 300 foot gash. A ship that took years to build took only two hours and 40 minutes to sink. History tells us that out of 2,227 passengers, only 705 were rescued. By 2:20 a.m. April 15, the Titanic was gone. The unsinkable had done the unthinkable, she disappeared 13,120 feet beneath the black waters. Why? The bottom line was negligence.

Jesus is coming, and every day must be lived according to



Sims

his holy Word. We must not be negligent in our worship, witness, or our walk with our Lord. Any time, any day, Jesus will come!

**Trials of the saints (3:3-4).** The scoffers mentioned by Peter were already present among his readers. Peter described the false teachers as "walking after their own lusts." The heretics denied the return of Christ, and they lived a life full of pleasure. We notice this attitude even in our days. People are so eager to gain worldly fame, that there is no time or room for Jesus. People truly think eternity is only a state of mind. Erratic theology and conduct is a growing

trend. People deny the truths of God's word, and live as though eternity is a myth. Regardless of this belief, Jesus shall return and judge our hearts. God's people must turn a deaf ear to this life of cynicism and kneel at the cross.

**Triumph over mockers (3:5-7).** Within these verses Peter shared several defenses in the return of Jesus Christ. Peter built his defense by declaring God to be the Creator of the universe. Only God could put a song in the life of birds, only God could make the stars shine, only God could make the seasons. Peter recognized that God is sovereign. Whatever the scoffers were saying, Peter acknowledged that no one will interrupt the plans of God.

**Trust in God's promises (3:8-10).** Every believer needs to memorize this portion of holy

scripture. Mankind is warned, Jesus will return. Thus, the opportunity for repentance is now! Peter reflected on Psalm 90:4 to emphasize the importance of God's ways. Peter urged his readers to look at "time" from the perspective of God. No one knows the time of Christ return, therefore daily preparation is admonished. God is far above our little limitations of time. Peter affirmed that God is long-suffering toward us and extends all opportunity to accept Christ as Savior. God pleads for all to come to salvation, yet hearts turn cold and indifferent. The word "repent" was a favorite word of Peter. This was Peter's theme; repent and turn to Jesus.

**Task of every believer (3:11-15a).** Knowing that Jesus will return, Peter urged his readers to live a holy life. The delay of Christ was not caused by God's powerlessness, rather, God was

extending mercy. The word "conversation" in verse 11 is a reference to total behavior. Peter desired every area of life to be dedicated to Jesus. Believers should live peaceful, expectant lives, because Jesus is coming again! With this expectation, they were to live totally to the Lord. This lifestyle is only possible by the "long-suffering" of the Lord. "Long-suffering" refers to Christ on the cross. When sinners receive Jesus and his forgiveness, power to live is available through the blood. We must be diligent in our attitudes, actions, and daily renew our faith in Jesus who makes all free. May our prayer be: Lord, your power is my courage, your promises my comfort, your presence my confidence — I rest my life, my soul and my future in your hands.

*Sims is pastor of First Church, Pontotoc.*

## FAMILY BIBLE SERIES

### Respect one another

**Prov. 4:1-5; 6:20; 10:1; 22:6; 31:26-28**

**By Nancie E. Simmons**

There have been many people that I have known during my life for which I have great respect. One person who comes to mind is my first piano teacher. She was also my elementary music teacher and played the piano at my church. My love for music came from her as she patiently taught me how to play the piano. There are also other teachers from years past who inspired me to study hard and to learn. I respect them for their knowledge and their perseverance. Lastly, I respect my parents who have instilled in me godly morals and have given me the idea that whatever goal I set, with hard work, I can achieve.



Simmons

I have not yet had the great honor of being a parent, even though my kids at school sometimes want to "take me home" to be their mother. So, I can only write mostly about what I know, which is being a child.

**Parents, respect your children (22:6; 31:26-28).** It is true that children should respect their parents, but on the other hand, parents should earn that respect. To earn this respect one must "practice what you preach." As a music teacher I really get my exercise because I am doing everything that I ask my kids to do in class. I think the same should be true with parents. If a parent wants a child to do what is right,

then the parent must also be doing what is right. There should be no double standards between children and parents.

Even though parents sometimes have treated their children with respect and have been consistent with their teachings, children still choose to do the opposite of what they are taught. When a parent finds himself in this situation, he must turn that child over to God. Hopefully, as the scripture says, "if you train up a child in the way he should go, when he is old, he will never depart from it."

**Children, respect your parents (4:1-5; 6:20; 10:1).** Each year I teach I find fewer and fewer children who know to say "yes ma'am" and "no ma'am." Also, at times I find children who do not respect other people's property and will destroy things that are not

theirs. When a person respects something, he places value or high regard on it. The same is true with respect for other people. If you respect someone, you will value or have a high regard for that person.

It seems that parents only have a short period of time to teach a child all the life-lessons that they need. As children we have to take on the responsibility to listen to our parents.

It was hard for me, until I was grown and living on my own, to realize that my parents were really smart. I stayed in a state of denial from age thirteen until about age twenty-two. It is funny, once I moved away, I constantly called home to ask questions and get information from my parents who had this overflowing wealth of knowledge! That is when I ultimately gained my great respect for my parents.

Parents and children need to be shown respect. We can show

our respect through polite words, consideration for their feelings, listening to their opinion (even when you think you might not need it), including them in your daily activities, and carrying out their wishes (because it will make them happy). These actions will make them feel valued and held in high regard.

God also wants our respect. We are his children because he is our Heavenly Father. We can show God respect in our daily actions and through worship on Sundays. We show respect when we stop all movement and bow our heads in prayer. Also, when we immerse ourselves in his Word and "never swerve from it" we will be showing God great respect because we value spending time with him and our actions will reflect this.

*Simmons teaches music at Harper McCaughan Elementary and is a member of First Church, Gulfport.*

# Pastor: include parents in teen ministries



## Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx  
copyright 1998

Z VXQR JDC CD VXGG  
CER IZOECRDMN WMC  
NZJIRIN CD IRLRJCXJVR.  
GMFR KZSR: CEZICH-CAD

Clue: Q = M

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Mark Four Twenty-Four.

**Do the math.**  
**Spell out the answers.**

### ACROSS:

1.  $3 + 2$
2.  $50 + 50$
3.  $10 - 9$
4.  $5 + 5$
5.  $3 + 3$

### DOWN:

5.  $5 + 2$
6.  $6 - 3$
7.  $8 - 4$
8.  $4 + 4$
9.  $4 + 5$

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP) — Rather than "a teenage problem," America has "a parent problem," a Southern Baptist pastor told youth workers attending a session on involving parents in youth ministry.

"Traditionally, we have left one of the main ingredients out of youth ministry — parents. We have not intentionally included parents in youth ministry planning," John Crittenden Jr., pastor of Forest Church, Louisville, Ky., said during the Black Church Leadership Conference Aug. 17-21 at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Conference Center.

Crittenden emphasized one of the greatest opportunities of a church youth ministry is to equip parents to do their jobs better.

"Parents have been commissioned by God to raise their children. It's not the responsibility of the church, the schools, or the juvenile court system to raise our teenagers," Crittenden said.

"Our teenagers are not junior adults. They're not your buddies. Parents must be parents," he pointed out.

He urged youth workers to maintain ongoing communication with parents to keep them informed about what is taking place in the youth ministry and to avoid the development of perceptions that the youth ministry is somehow in competition with the role of parents.

"Parents should not feel threatened by youth leaders," Crittenden said. They should know what activities are planned and not have to "worry about where you're taking their kids."

Communication with parents should come directly from youth leaders or through the church newsletter or one targeted to youth parents, he said.

"Never assume teenagers are taking notes home to their parents. Parents appreciate being saturated with information. The more information you share, the happier the parents will be," Crittenden said.

He suggested a variety of activities to involve parents of teenagers, including:

- ◆ support groups.
- ◆ parent-teen dialogue.
- ◆ open house for parents to tour church youth facilities.
- ◆ parenting conferences or workshops.

"One of the biggest problems we have with teenagers is mixed signals," Crittenden said. "Mama says, 'No,' and daddy says, 'Yes.' We need to teach our parents how to communicate with each other and with their teenagers."

◆ meetings with individual parents.

◆ invitations to parents to observe youth activities.

- ◆ parent appreciation night.

"Teens spell love T-I-M-E," Crittenden said. "If parents don't spend time with their teenagers,

they are setting them up as targets for drugs or gangs."

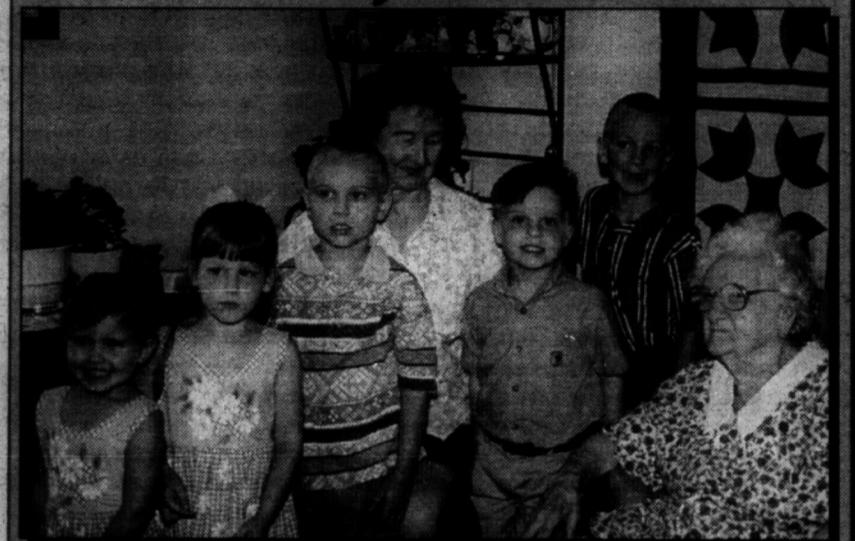
Youth workers also need to educate parents about the kinds of music that attract teens, he said, since most listen privately via headsets.

"When the headsets came out, teenagers gained a private world for listening to music. You'd better snatch those headsets off and listen to their music," Crittenden said.

He suggested parents should write out their Christian testimonies and share them with their teens. "Let them read your life. Don't hide your past. Be real."

Black Church Leadership Conference was sponsored by the Southern Baptist Convention's LifeWay Christian Resources, International Mission Board, North American Mission Board and Annuity Board.

## Beautiful music



Preschoolers from Locust Hill Church, Pontotoc Association, recently visited Rosewood Personal Care Home in Belden. The children sang songs and gave gifts that they had made to each resident. Children participating were Sarah Manning, Cassidy Blaylock, Evan Boyd, Tarver Reeder, and Luke Werner. Residents pictured are Mrs. Crocker and Mrs. Welsh. (BR special photo)

## Single-day tickets now available for CrossSeekers

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Single-day tickets for the Sept. 4-5 CrossSeekers celebration at the New Orleans Convention Center are now available for purchase from LifeWay Christian Resources.

Several widely-known Christian artists and speakers,

such as Steven Curtis Chapman, Jars of Clay, and Anne Graham Lotz, will be featured at the event, which is sponsored by LifeWay's National Student Ministry (NSM) and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA).

CrossSeekers is a nationwide

discipleship initiative launched by NSM last summer. The New Orleans event is designed to celebrate response to the CrossSeekers Covenant which, to date, has been signed by approximately 6,000 students across the country.

While registration for the New Orleans event has been open for several months, a two-day ticket for \$79 was the only purchase option until now.

The cost for the single-day ticket is \$35 and includes access to the "Covenant Mall," a 100,000-square foot exhibit area highlighting missions and ministry opportunities and Christian resources for college students.

Christian artists to perform during the Sept. 4 celebration,

which begins at 7:30 p.m., include Chapman, Anointed, and MercyMe. The speaker is Lotz.

The line-up of Christian artists for Sept. 5 includes Jars of Clay, Third Day, MercyMe, Jennifer Knapp and Rick Muchow. Speakers include Carey Casey and Dave Edwards. Tickets for this day's event are \$50 each and also include access to the exhibit area.

The CrossSeekers celebration is open to college students, high school juniors and seniors and their leaders.

To register, call toll-free (888) CROSS98. For more information about the event and the CrossSeekers movement, visit the initiative's Internet site at [www.crossseekers.org](http://www.crossseekers.org).

### Dear Pen Pal Club:

Hi! My name is Erin Chambers. I live in Thaxton, MS. I am almost 12 years old and I will be in the 7th grade this year. My favorite hobbies include: roller blading, swimming, singing, talking on the phone and being with my family and friends. I attend Shiloh Baptist Church in Oxford, MS, and go to school at Lafayette Middle School at Oxford, MS.

Please write me at 90 Carter Rd. Thaxton, MS 38871. Your Pal, Erin Chambers

